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Letter dated 7 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you of the decision of the Government of the Republic of Botswana to present Botswana's candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2011-2014 in respect of elections to be held by the General Assembly in May 2011.

In this connection and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, I have the further honour to forward herewith Botswana's pledges and commitments in the pursuit of the global human rights agenda (see annex).

Let me also use this opportunity to reaffirm my Government's commitment to use this membership to advance the promotion and protection of human rights as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as related treaties, conventions, protocols and international law.

(*Signed*) C. T. **Ntwaagae**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 7 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Botswana's voluntary pledges and commitments in support of its candidature for the Human Rights Council, 2011-2014

General policy on human rights

1. Botswana firmly believes in the universality, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and all other international human rights instruments.

2. Botswana is strongly committed to the effective promotion, fulfilment and protection of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, all of which are fully guaranteed by the Constitution of Botswana.

3. In an effort to facilitate equitable protection and full enjoyment of human rights, Botswana has progressively undertaken extensive administrative, policy and legislative reforms with a view to ensuring that its laws, policies and practices conform to the extent possible to international human rights standards and practices.

4. Botswana attaches great importance to principles of equality, social harmony, tolerance and non-discrimination. Botswana was among the countries which were in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid in the region, and in this regard, continues to play an active role in the strengthening of the rule of law and democracy, promotion of international peace and security and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national, regional and international levels.

5. Botswana reaffirms its strong support for the work of the United Nations human rights system, and continues to actively participate in all its activities within the Human Rights Council and at the General Assembly.

6. To this end, Botswana has consistently been firm and unequivocal in its deprecation of impunity, gross violation of human rights and crimes against humanity wherever and whenever they occur.

7. Botswana was a member of the Commission on Human Rights from 1988 to 1990 and from 1998 to 2000, and constructively contributed during its tenure to the advancement of work in the United Nations human rights system.

8. In light of the above, Botswana voluntarily makes the following pledges and commitments, in line with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 60/251.

International commitments

9. Botswana has always done its utmost to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly with respect to fulfilling its obligations to the respective human rights instruments. Consistent with its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, and the need for Member States to maintain a balance between rights and responsibilities, Botswana

has signed, acceded to and ratified the following core international human rights instruments:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratification in 2000)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (accession in 1974)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratification in 2000)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (accession in 1996)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (accession in 1995)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (accession in 2003)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (ratification in 2004)
- Amendment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 43, paragraph 2) (acceptance in 2002)
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ratification in 1986)
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ratification in 2001)
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (ratification in 2002)
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (signed in 1998)

10. Having actively participated in the multilateral negotiations on institution-building, which culminated in the establishment of the Human Rights Council, Botswana undertakes to work constructively with other members of the international community in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Human Rights Council.

11. Botswana is fully committed to the innovative initiative of the universal periodic review within the Human Rights Council, and will continue to engage constructively and objectively in its work.

12. In December 2008, Botswana appeared before the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, at which it engaged constructively and objectively in an exercise to review and enhance its situation of human rights.

13. In March 2009, the Human Rights Council adopted the outcome document from Botswana's universal periodic review process, containing the Government's commitments to fulfilling its human rights obligations at all levels.

14. Botswana fully supports the system of special procedures of the United Nations human rights system and is committed to cooperating with the respective special mechanisms:

- In 2005 the Special Rapporteur on the right to education undertook a country visit to Botswana which the Government of Botswana facilitated
- Botswana hosted the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people on a country visit in March 2009

15. In addition, Botswana pledges to cooperate fully with treaty bodies and participate actively in the discussions on the reform of the treaty bodies for a more effective human rights monitoring system.

Domestic commitments

16. Botswana will continue to enhance its efforts to ensure that all the existing national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are strengthened.

17. Botswana remains committed to the creation of an umbrella national human rights institution, in line with the Paris Principles, in accordance with its pledges made under the universal periodic review mechanism.

18. Botswana will continue to fully implement its human rights obligations and commitments, including those emanating from its universal periodic review recommendations.

19. Botswana will continue to promote genuine and active dialogue with civil society in the area of promotion and protection of human rights.

20. Botswana will continue to cooperate fully with all treaty bodies, including through meeting its reporting obligations to such bodies.

21. Botswana is committed to continuing its ongoing domestic legislative reform, as well as harmonizing national legislation with international commitments.

22. In pursuit of its National Vision 2016 and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Botswana will continue to implement programmes and initiatives intended to advance the promotion and protection of human rights for its citizens.

23. Botswana will continue to fully implement its policies and programmes on gender mainstreaming through, inter alia, the national gender action plan, developed in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

24. Botswana will continue its efforts to advance the rights and empowerment of women, particularly within the framework of the national policy on women in development and UN-Women.

At the level of the Human Rights Council

25. Botswana reaffirms its commitment to contribute positively to the work and institutional development of the Human Rights Council so as to ensure that it remains a credible and efficient institution that can spur international cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights.

26. Botswana is committed to engaging constructively in the ongoing debate on the reform of the special procedures of the human rights machinery of the United Nations to ensure that they maintain the highest standards for the furtherance of the ideals of non-selectivity and impartiality of the Human Rights Council in the discharge of its mandate.

27. Botswana will pursue an open and transparent approach, underpinned by the true spirit of bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral dialogue, as a means to advancing the work of the Human Rights Council.

28. Botswana will continue to contribute constructively to the further strengthening of the universal periodic review process, as part of the institution-building package of the Human Rights Council.

29. Botswana undertakes to continue to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council in the implementation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

30. Botswana will cooperate fully with existing and future special procedures of the Human Rights Council within the framework of their respective mandates and the Code of Conduct.

30 December 2010